

Voices from the Field

Sustainable Water, Air, Sanitation and Hygiene (SWASH) Project, Nagarkot



Catching Rain Water,
Solving the Water Woe



Striving to Build
a SWASTHA Community



Breaking the Silence



Age is No Barrier



Catching Rain Water, Solving the Water Woe

Tirtha Maya Tamang, 35, had to walk five hours a day to fetch water for the students of Shree Kalika Secondary School located in Nagarkot. "I had to complete my household chores early in the morning so that I could fetch water before the school starts. I would then rush home to have some food and get back to school on time," school support staff Tirtha Maya said. The nearest water source is approximately 30 minutes' walk away and water had to be collected at least five times per day to meet the demand. Managing the chores, collecting the water and working at school were very difficult. Two years back, this was her daily routine.

The school is supplied by an existing water pipeline from a nearby community, *Danda Tole*. However, the source often dries up, therefore the supply is not sufficient. The school could provide a very limited amount of water for drinking and other purposes, however the lack of water, especially for toilet use and handwashing, increased the risks of health hazards among the children. As a result, each student was compelled to carry water from home, which was often not sufficient throughout the school day.

Presently, the situation has significantly improved with the installation of a rainwater harvesting system at the school. The system includes a 5000 liter water storage tank, a 500 liter tank for filtration and a 500 liter tank for collecting



filtered water. The water is filtered through a Biosand Filter. Now, even when there is no tap water supply, the school can provide sufficient safe drinking water to more than 150 children and staff members. In addition, children do not have the burden of carrying water from home. Enough water to maintain their hygiene has provided an opportunity to live healthy, active and happy lives.

Moreover, Tirtha Maya, with a smile in her face, shared, "I had never thought that our school would ever solve this water problem and get rid of the difficulties. All this has been possible because we could catch the rain."

Striving to Build a *SWASTHA* Community



Prapti Tamang, 24, resident of Syauli Bazaar-14, Nagarkot, is a well-respected and popular member of her community. She is often seen visiting households to raise awareness on WASH and imparting knowledge on the issue which she has gained through various training and programs. "In the past, open defecation was rampant in our community. Children defecated openly beside pathways and others went to a nearby bush. But now, you can see a toilet in every household

and I feel really glad to tell that people use it," Prapti said.

After Prapti became aware of the need and importance of proper sanitation and hygiene, she was determined to bring change to her community. She served as the 'change agent' in the community and helped others become aware of how to make a 'SWASTHA' (healthy) community which includes the use of safe water and maintaining proper sanitation and hygiene including the proper management of a clean kitchen environment.

Now, community members frequently discuss WASH and health issues. Due to the improved awareness on the issue amongst the community, temporary toilets were built, either by the community or with the support of various agencies, after the earthquake of 25 April 2015.

"I have seen a radical change in my village and this change indicates consciousness amongst the community on safe water, sanitation and hygiene. I am proud to say that our village is setting an example: an example that can serve other communities to become a SWASTHA community," Prapti said.

Breaking the Silence

Like many other girls, 13-year-old Fulkumari Tamang, a grade nine student at Shree Chunadevi Lower Secondary School in Nagarkot, used to feel too ashamed to speak about menstruation. Attending school during menstruation used to be a huge problem and the situation would be too embarrassing for Fulkumari. Sometimes, the situation was further exacerbated by the blood stains on a school bench due to excessive bleeding.

“After we were provided homemade pad making training at school, we have been using them instead of pieces of cloth so that now, we do not have to face the embarrassing moment of having stains. It is cheap, and easy to make and use,” said Fulkumari. “After participating in awareness raising campaigns on menstrual hygiene, I have learnt that it is essential to properly wash sanitary pads (homemade pad made of cloth) with soap and dry them in the sun. I have even convinced my mother, who at first always shouted at me to dry them in a place where no one would easily see them,” she added.

Now, Fulkumari can openly discuss the issue with her sister and friends. The boys in her class have also been oriented on the issue and are now very supportive and talk openly on the subject. *“We have formed a child club of 24-members in our school. Sanitation and hygiene is one of the various committees within the club of which I have been engaged as an active member. Through trainings, I have learned a lot about the issue. I am now not*



Photo Credit: Roshma Shrestha/ENPHO

ashamed of talking about it openly. We should further help each and every girl to break this silence as I have done,” Fulkumari shared.

Age is No Barrier



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Purna Lal Shrestha, 80, lives with his wife at Shakyatole in Nagarkot. He has three daughters and three sons but they live in another village and rarely come to visit him. His house collapsed in the devastating earthquake of 25 April 2015 and so he is living in a temporary shelter.

Prior to the earthquake, Purna Lal and his wife were supported with the construction of a toilet, but convincing them of the importance of a toilet was not an easy task. Despite regular counseling by community mobilizers, Purna Lal was reluctant to construct and use a toilet. One night, his wife went to a bush to defecate and was almost bitten by a snake. Only then did Purna Lal realize the need for a toilet and insisted the community mobilizers support him in building one.

However, Purna Lal's toilet was destroyed, along with his house, in the earthquake. Having had a toilet and now understanding its importance, he constructed one by himself with stone and mud. He completed its construction in just two days, to the surprise of all his neighbours.

“Definitely, until you realize, you can never know the value of anything. Even I did not want to know about the importance of a toilet until we understood its real need. And, once you have will, nothing can ever stop you. I am happy that I could build a toilet and that now we have no fear of snake bites while going to the toilet at night,” said Purna Lal.



About the Project

ENPHO with the support of WaterAid Nepal has been implementing **Sustainable Water, Air, Sanitation and Hygiene (SWASH)** project in Nagarkot, Bhaktapur since 2013. The project intends to ensure the provision of safe drinking water, improved sanitation and good hygiene practices that allow people to live with good health, dignity and comfort. Nagarkot was severely hit by the massive earthquake of April 2015, therefore the project has been redesigned to focus on the integration of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and disaster risk reduction (DRR). For the year 2016, the project will focus on rebuilding and recovering damaged WASH facilities within the community and institutions and sensitizing community people on disaster preparedness.

This publication includes some of the voices from the people of Nagarkot sharing their problems and depicting how they could resolve it through the support of SWASH project.

For Further Information:



Environment and Public Health Organization (ENPHO)

G.P.O. Box 4102; 110/25 Aadarsha Marg-1

New Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone: 977-1-4468641 | Fax: 977-1-4491376

Email: enpho@enpho.org | Website: www.enpho.org